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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the California Information Dissemination Project, which was funded from 1976 to 1981 to improve access to information on educatonal resources in California. The report is divided into three sections: (1) project rationale, which provides background information on the California State Department of Education, its Office of Information and Dissemination, and the events leading to the submission of the capacity building proposal; (2) project implementation, which describes major activities in the areas of leadership, linkage, and resources; and (3) project outcomes, which lists significant project results, identifies areas of project impact, and offers advice for new capacity building projects. Major services and results of the California Information Dissemination Project include the organization of conferences, meetings, training sessions, and workshops, the development and implementation of a dissemination plan, the production of education information packets, the location and evaluation of new educational information resources, the purchase of ERIC files and a computer for the California State Library, the coordination of resources for California educators with the State Library, and the implementation of a distribution system for disseminating information on educational resources. A copy of the dissemination plan for the California State Department of Education is appended. (ESR)

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CALIFORNIA STATE CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

End of Project Report
State Capacity Building Project
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Introduction

Abstract

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Introduction

The California State Department of Education received a capacity building dissemination grant from the National Institute of Education from 1976 through 1981. This project had a staff of three people and an annual budget ranging from $135,000 (first year) to $99.900 (fifth year). The Office of Information, a service unit within the state agency, administered the project.

The project had specific goals and objectives for each year, but the overall purpose was to improve educational practices in California by helping educators locate and use current knowledge.

This report summarizes the project for the five year period. It is divided into three major parts--project rationale, project implementation, and project outcomes.

The first section, project rationale, contains background information on the California State Department of Education, the Office of Information and Dissemination, and the events that led to the submission of the capacity building proposal.

The second section, project implementation, describes the major activities during the five years funding period in the areas of Leadership, Linkage, and Resources.

The third section lists some of the significant outcomes, identifies areas of impact, and offers advise to new capacity building projects.

CALIFORNIA INFORMATION DISSEMINATION PROJECT

Project Abstract

The Information Dissemination Project implemented a dissemination effort which provided Department staff, school administrators, teachers and interested citizens with the resources and information they need to improve education. The project staff continued to work cooperatively with Department staff (including consultants who work directly with schools serving as field agents), the Dissemination Steering Committee, the Information Dissemination Committee, and the education laboratories.

Project goals were:

- To coordinate a dissemination planning and implementation system for Department programs and California schools,
- To increase the educational resources available to Department staff, administrators, teachers, press and members of the general public,
- To link Department staff, educators in schools and the general public with various networks and information resources.

Dissemination: The project staff focused efforts on designated priority programs within the Department of Education--School Improvement, Special Education. This was accomplished by the following activities: communication needs were identified; available resources reviewed; developed new resources that were needed (publications, media, etc.); determined delivery systems; and gathered feedback from the Department and the field to determine if communications needs were met. This was an ongoing process; resources continued to be added, deleted or revised as communications needs changed.

Resources: The project staff coordinated resources for California educators with the State Library, which has a complete ERIC collections as well as access to over 95 other data bases; San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC); and other resource centers in California serving on the Information Dissemination Committee--Los Angeles Educaitonal Resource Services (Lances), Assisting Contra

Costa Education through Resource Services(ACCESS), etc. The Department staff used these resources in planning and development work, answering questions from schools and helping schools solve provlems.

Linkage: The project staff worked with selected resource centers throughout the state to locate, screen and evaluate information resources such as new publications and media. These materials were shared with Department staff, schools, educations networks, all known resource centers and educational laboratories. This process of linking resources to educators offered solutions to many educational problems. Training was provided to project networks on how to locate information and how to use it apporpriately in improving educational instruction. Feedback data was collected from the Department and the field and used to add, revise and delete information resources as needed.

Section I

Project Rationale

The California State Department of Education --the fiscal agency for this project--was created in 1921 to provide state-level administration of the public school system. Today the Department has a staff of over 2,500 employees and is responsible for the disbursement of over $4 billion in funds, materials and supplies to local education agencies. There are approximately four million students in California served by 180,000 teachers in over 7,000 public schools. Racial minorities comprise 40 percent of the public school population in California, with Hispanics making up over 23 percent.

The department is responsible for the public elementary and secondary system, postsecondary programs for adults, special schools, statewide public library services and the approval of some private schools.

The Department of Education assists schools in implementing new requirements, monitors programs for compliance with laws and regulations, and offers general technical assistance to improve educational practices.

Putting It all Together--An attempt to improve department communications with local education agencies and the general public began in 1975 with a formal meeting on March 12-13. A speech made at the meeting by Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction, set the stage. The speech is as follows:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
INFORMATION, DISSEMINATION AND DIFFUSION

> I want to comment briefly about my concern for developing the kind of system that has the flexibility necessary to make us more effective in serving children. From my point of view, our challenge is to develop an information, dissemination,

and diffusion system which:

1. Is able to give us progress in achieving department objectives, and

2. Is in tune with and responsive to our many constituents. We, the department and our constituents, need to agree on what ought to happen.

3. The system should be comprehensive and cohesive, not fragmented.

As we approach the planning of such a system, may I suggest you ask yourselves the "why" question first, and then the "what" and "how" question--for so often we forget why we are doing what we are doing!

Today we need systems designed to process data in which the use is predetermined by the users. This assumes that school people will locate and store only relevant data, and that data centers and education resource centers will not become dumping grounds. The need for an information system which effectively serves producers and users is long overdue.

Some attention should be given to a communications network which is designed to elicit response from our many constituents. We need both input and feedback from educators and general public. At present, most all communication is directed downward to our constituents--let's turn it around a bit. The network that links the department with our constituents needs careful review.

The system to deliver successful practices to schools which have need is not developed department-wide. Staff members who are assigned to the functions of comprehensive planning and monitoring and work with schools have a beautiful opportunity to spread the word and help schools adopt or adapt successful practices. However, instructional practices must be validated as successful before we disseminate and diffuse them because we should be sure that the practices work and do, in fact, benefit students.

A big mistake we often make is to disseminate practices with the idea of encouraging schools to adopt them and too often, however, we forget to allocate sufficient resources to conduct demonstration and training for staff in the adopting schools.

Another great concern is quality. Materials developed for dissemination and diffusion should be of the highest quality. Poor quality productions will contribute to the erosion of our leadership image and turn people away.

And finally, in all that we do, we must evaluate our efforts and assess the impact we are making on education

in California. We must be accountable to our constituents for our objectives and the level of demonstrated performance must be that which was expected or better.

My challenge to you is: Get it all together . . . a total statewide comprehensive information, dissemination and diffusion system.

The job is overwhelming and it will be difficult at times. Resources are available throughout the department and in the state. Most of the pieces to the giant puzzle which you will attempt to assemble are present in California.

If you pull together toward this common objective, it will happen. If you play the game of protecting your interests at the expense of the common objective, we will surely fail. Before a statewide system can ever be established, the department must put its own house in order. It is my expectation that you will begin this group process today and tomorrow.

I wish you well!

Participants at this meeting defined seven problems that needed to be addressed.

They were:

1. The departmentwide system for collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, storing and retrieving data is not cohesive and systematic; data is often duplicated.

2. The goals, objectives, priorities and needs of the department and the constituents* are not addressed systematically.

3. Departmental criteria for information, dissemination and diffusion decision making are not established.

4. The division of labor among departmental divisions and/or units and the constituents is not defined with respect to information, dissemination and diffusion responsibilities and activities.

5. A systematic linkage network between the "senders" and the "receivers" is not well established.

6. The current "overload" of information is burdensome to all the users, the department and its constituents.

* Constituents were defined by participants of the siminar as students and parents, the public at large, teachers, administrators, school boards, county offices of education, colleges and universities, educational research and development groups and the legislature (state and national).

7. A system for rapid response to information needs is not well established.

Following the challenging presentation by Wilson Riles and considering the identified problems, the staff in the Office of Information began working on a proposal to be submitted to the National Institute of Education. Working sessions and planning meetings were held with key staff in other department units. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted. The second proposal submitted to N.I.E. was funded in 1976 as part of the Capacity Building Program for state educational agencies. A five year effort began to achieve the following:

1. Improve the capacity and productivity of educational agencies in California for knowledge production, acquisition, dissemination, and utilization by:

   (a) strengthening the skills of key personnel;

   (b) improving the knowledge-oriented methods, techniques, procedures, and practices employed by such agencies; and

   (c) strengthening and enhancing the capacities of educational agencies to produce, acquire, disseminate, and utilize knowledge resources.

2. Foster the development of a statewide comprehensive dissemination capacity by:

   (a) encouraging and guiding educaitonal agencies in California to participate in the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive dissemination capacity;

   (b) stimulating and encouraging educational agencies to study, plan, carry out, and appraise their collective and individual knowledge resource needs; and

   (c) assisting and supporting educational agencies in the development of dissemination programs in a more innovative, deliberate, and analytical fashion than otherwise might be employed.

3. Improve and increase access to a wide range of relevant knowledge resources which have potential for improving education by:

   (a) enhancing the awareness of educational practitioners regarding available knowledge resources, both those systematically developed through R and D efforts and those emerging from educational practice;

   (b) making the services of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) available to educational practitioners; and

   (c) developing and making abridged files regarding validated educational practices and priority educational concerns available to educational decision makers and practitioners.

4. Promote and facilitate the effective use of knowledge resources by educational decision makers and practitioners as they strive to improve educational practice by:

   (a) providing adequate and appropriate incentives;

   (b) creating cooperative working relationships, interaction structures, and interpersonal linkages; and

   (c) establishing and maintaining effective two-way communication.

The Office of Information, where the project was placed, contains a number of subunits which provide information and disseminations to department programs--writing and editing, news releases, graphic arts, audio visual production, public service broadcasts, and audio-visual equipment. During the project, these services were used to support and promote dissemination efforts.

Section II

Project Implementation

Staffing for the project included a director--who was also chief of the Office of Information--a manager, an information specialist, and a stenographer. These four people although formally in a line staff arrangement, worked as a team in making major decisions and in implementing the project. The director's position was supported by state funding and the other three positions were supported with project funds. The specific duties of each position are listed below.

Project director--responsible for:

- project administration including approval of all major project functions;
- communications about project activities to other department administrators and programs;
- supervision of project staff.

Project manager--responsible for:

- day to day project operations;
- planning implementation strategies for project activities including distribution of information packages and workshops and training sessions;
- preparing quarterly reports, monthly status reports, and other evaluation or progress reports as required by NIE or the department;
- plan dissemination activities for various department programs.

Information Specialist--responsible for:

- processing all search requests and insuring client satisfaction;
- maintaining all documentation and search records;
- answering educational questions received by the office from educators or the general public;
- conducting research for special reports or press releases produced by the department.

Stenographer--responsible for

- general clerical work for project staff--answering phones, typing correspondence, preparing materials for meetings;
- taking dictation and typing special reports and information packages;
- maintaing project files and cateloging resource materials.

The discussions and input sessions that were held during the planning phase helped lay the implementation groundwork and create a general awareness among department staff about the project. When funding was secured, key people knew what to expect initially and what opportunities they would have for participation and input. Discussions about the project were held with the following department units:

- Elementary Field Services (Early Childhood Education/State and Federal EDY);
- Secondary Reform;
- Secondary Field Services (State and Federal EDY);
- Curriculum Services;
- Special Education;
- Bilingual Education;
- Migrant Education;
- California Right to Read;
- ESEA IVC-Innovative Projects Staff;
- Environmental Education;
- Career Education;
- Nonpublic Schools Coordinator;
- Adult Education (Community Education Project).

The first major activity was to establish access to a resource base; secondly to link these resources to selected clients, and thirdly to define and institutionalize a dissemination leadership role within the State Education Agency (S.E.A.).

LEADERSHIP

Leadership was developed at the S.E.A. level by establishing procedures for assisting programs in developing dissemination plans, implementing their stratagies and evaluating the impact upon their clients.

Migrant Education

The first major dissemination plan that the project developed was for the Migrant Education unit. The Migrant Education Field Advisory Committee assisted in the development and implementation of this plan through a county office network of Migrant Education Personnel housed in nine regional offices. The Migrant Information Development and Dissemination Committee was formed in California during the 1976-77 fiscal year. It consists of nine regional representatives appointed by their directors, one representative from the California Mini-Corps and one representative from the California State Department of Education. At that time Migrant Education served seventy thousand students in over one thousand schools with a budget of thirty million dollars. The purpose of migrant education is to maintain as much continuity as possible to the educational programs of these students who move from district to district during the school year. This is accomplished by providing migrant children with supplemental programs of instruction as needed by each individual child. Emphasis is placed upon reading, math, language development, and functional use of the English language.

Special summer school programs provide these children with opportunities to participate in field trips, outdoor education, team sports, arts and crafts, and music.

Health services that are available to migrant children include screening, identification and follow-up of both medical and dental problems and also transportation to and from treatment centers.

Dissemination efforts focused on informing the parents of potential migrant students about the education and health services that could be obtained for their children even though they were not in the state for the entire school year and moved from district to district. There are community aides for the Migrant Education Program who facilitate communications between the home and the school. This group acted as linkers in migrant dissemination by explaining resources to migrant families and needs to the educators.

Migrant Education was important to the project because it was the first unit to request project assistance in planning a major dissemination thrust. The same planning procedures were followed for other programs until the department Dissemination Plan was finalized in 1978.

School Improvement

In September 1977 the legislature passed and the Governor signed AB 65, a five year $4.3 billion school finance reform bill that also included $200 million to be used to implement restructuring efforts by elementary and secondary schools in California. This School Improvement Program modified the three-year-old Early Childhood Education reform program and included similar authorizations for junior and senior high schools.

The department organized several ad hoc task teams to develop procedure to implement this School Improvement Program. The project director worked as a member of the team charged with developing a department/LEA communications system and also for preparing a design for a regional resources network. This team served as the department's information dissemination planning committee--utilizing a 40 member advisory committee composed of administrators, teachers, parents, school board members, and high school students. This program reemphasizes participation in public education giving all citizens a voice in determining what happens in their local schools, Each school participating in SIP has its own

school site council, a group composed of school staff members, parents, other residents of the community, and at the high school level, students. Each council prepares a three-year education plan tailored to meet the specific needs of a particular school.

This program was and still is the department's top priority, and therefore was project's top priority. Almost half of the state's 7,500 plus public schools are School Improvement schools. In all, SIP aids some 1.3 million California students, including 72 percent of all youngsters from kindergarten through third grade. At the high school level 20 percent of all schools participate. The project assisted with the development of two slide/tape presentations, four press releases, and two publications about this program.

A series of information meetings were held by the project in 1980 for members of the School Site Councils. (There are 3,400 councils.) These meetings were attended by teachers, parents, high school students, school board members, and administrators. Distributed were: listings of staff development resources, copies of the School Improvement newsletter, selected sections of the law pertaining to School Site Councils, directories of department audio visual materials and publications, four selected department publications about School Improvement, tips for getting local media coverage, reprints of articles about School Improvement, and a listing of educational acronyms. These materials are still being requested and used throughout California.

Mini sessions were held at these meetings about parent and citizen participation, program review, and School Improvement planning.

Dissemination Plan and Technical Assistance Guide

In 1978, a dissemination plan (see attachment A) was developed for the department. The plan was more structured and had a more formalized process than was used for Migrant Education at the beginning of the project. The plan tells people how to use various department services to meet their

communication needs. The plan explains to department staff how the Office of Information can assist individual programs in assessing their current materials and determining the effectiveness of their existing networks, how to identify needed resources, how to develop these resources, how to plan distribution and dissemination, and how to evaluate these efforts.

A technical assistance guide was developed for use by department staff in the preparation of written dissemination plans for proposals. This guide gives people step by step procedures on how to conduct a needs assessment, and how to write measurable objectives, develop activities, and a realistic timeline and establish both product and process evaluation criteria.

Both the Dissemination plan and Technical assistance guide were developed for department staff use in planning dissemination strategies.

Dissemination Committees

In 1979, two field committees were formed and a statewide dissemination forum was planned.

One of these committees is called Information Dissemination Committee. This twenty-five member committee is made up of key information and dissemination people located in county and district resource centers, education laboratories, and U.S.O.E. Their major role was the development of a statewide dissemination network. These people have responsibilities for locating information and resources to meet the needs of the educators they serve in their respective geographic areas.

The other committee was the Dissemination Steering Committee which was a subcommittee of the Information Dissemination Committee--made up of representatives from the Far West Educational Laboratory, the Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory, San Mateo Educational Resource Center, U.S.O.E., Region IX, and the California State Department of Education. This committee served as an advisory group to the project and assisted in the coordination of dissemination.

During the fourth and fifth years of the project statewide dissemination forums were held--making information resources available to California educators and sharing solutions to common problems.

The first statewide dissemination conference, "Dissemination Network for the 80s," was held at Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Over 125 people from around the state participated in this conference. These participants included people having major responsibilities for dissemination in county offices of education and school districts and people having resources to offer California schools. Twenty-one different presentations were made about educational resources, ongoing information searches were conducted, utilizing Lockheed Dialog on-line computer systems, and there were numerous displays of materials set up in the meeting rooms and hallways.

Follow up information sent to all participants helped identify future dissemination needs which were then planned by the Dissemination Steering Committee. These activities were: (1) Overall coordination of dissemination in California, (2) Needs assessment, (3) Communications (fifth year conference), (4) Resources for California educators and (5) Building capacity and improving dissemination skills.

The focus for the fourth year forum was the establishment of a Dissemination network for the 80's. The focus of the fifth year forum was on the "how to's" of getting people in a local area to make appropriate use of information resources.

LINKAGE

Linkage was generally accomplished with already existing networks. Resources and information were shared with the following networks:

- principals of secondary schools implementing California's School Improvement Program;
- directors of Cooperatives--they administer categorical programs for rural counties;

- department field teams--50 consultants who work directly with county offices and school districts;
- public information officers in counties and large school districts.

Co-op Directors

At the beginning of the project of the co-op directors were selected as a priority network. This group of 64 administered consolidated services projects for small schools receiving funds for educationally disadvantaged children, for non-English and limited-English speaking students as well as other categorical programs for children with special needs. Because of the children these people serve (disadvantaged)and their geographic locations (rural and isolated), this was one way that the project addressed equity.

The project provided information resources from the San Mateo Educational Resource Center (SMERC) and from the department, and also provided workshops and meetings to enhance the group's informal networking.

An extensive evaluation was conducted of these services to the co-op directors by John A. Emrick in 1978. This was an important study because the types of services that were provided to these directors was to become a model for future services to other groups of people in the field. A case study analysis of services provided was used to determine the impact of the services and to make recommendations for future services.

The major findings of the study were:

1. The impact of the project services on individual cooperatives was generally positive and is perceived by these individuals as having improved the quality of services to their clients.
2. The Field Agent Services Project has produced a substantial impact on the consolidation of Cooperative Directors into an informal network or association.
3. Both the materials/services provided and the personnel/leadership style of the project were positively regarded by Cooperative Directors and were major factors in the effectiveness of the effort.

Based on the report's recommendations, the co-op directors continued to be and still are a priority client group for information services.

"California Linker Network" during the third year of the project was developed. These were 100 people who had major dissemination responsibilities in county offices and large school districts. The need for this network emerged in planning for the statewide dissemination forums. This group later became key participants in the forums and other related activities. SMERC personnel worked with the project in the selection of people for this important network.

Most of the linking activities of the project were through printed notifications about resources--how to get them and how to use them. Resource guides were producted by SMERC in the areas of special education, school violence and vandalism reduction, and general curriculum. The Office of Information distributes periodic memos entitled "New Resources" that lists and describes new materials available from government agencies.

Debriefing meetings were held annually for the Public Information Officers in county offices and school districts and with the Education Writers in California. The purpose of these briefings was to assist these two groups in locating timely and useful information for the clients they serve.

RESOURCES

Resources from SMERC, the state library, the department and other government agencies were shared through the project's various linking networks. SMERC resources, which included ERIC, FIDO, and other data basis, were made available by the project to department staff, co-op directors, and the principals of secondary schools implementing California's School Improvement Program. These networks also received all of the SMERC Resource Guides and selected new documents produced by the department.

When the project started, emphasis was placed on the distribution of resources to as many networks and individuals as possible. As the project progressed this emphasis shifted to training in the selection and use of resources.

Information requests over the five year period expanded to approximately thirty each month. Requests were for ERIC printouts; journal articles, statistical information, or answers to specific questions such as the ethnic enrollment of a given school district or the current level of funding for library projects in school districts. Some people knew exactly what they wanted to answer, a well thought through question. Others had broad needs and wanted some kind of assistance. The most common request in this latter category was (and still is) someone putting on a workshop in a school district on a certain topic and requesting anything that would help with the workshop--additional information on the topic, handout materials for the workshop, or audio visual presentations. Requests were at a peak when schools opened in the fall and were at a low during the early summer months.

Perodic trainings were held for department field staff who work with county offices and school districts. Topics included: how to request a master search; how to develop a resource package from a master search; how to develop a workshop around the results of a search; and how the Office of Information resources could be used to support staff field work.

The office's Media Unit produces audio visual kits to support its various programs. The project developed the back up training materials to accompany these kits and was responsible for distribution. Materials included: annotated bibliographies, descriptions of how to use the materials, sample training agendas, and support print resources. Audio visual kits were produced to support the following programs: School Improvement two kits two different years, Special Education, Data Management, Nutrition, and Health (Genetic Counseling). Copies of these materials were made available to large districts and county offices and were available for loan, free, to anyone in California.

Equity was addressed by this project by identifying three populations that had unequal access to information needed to solve the educational problems they faced. These were:

(1) Migrant education--unequal access due to language barriers. The professional educators in migrant education were faced with continuing frustrations about how to keep the flow of information and resources going to the migrant education students and parents even though almost everything was in English and geared to the English speaking culture. Efforts were made to maximize dissemination of spanish materials and to prioritorize those English materials in need of translation. Communications were channeled to the Spanish newspapers and T.V. stations through public services announcements. (See earlier discussion of Migrant Education under Leadership for more details of this program.)

(2) Co-op Directors--unequal access due to geography. These directors (see earlier discussion of their roles at the beginning of this section) serve rural and isolated areas of California and have responsibilities for multi programs. The project provided this group with all new department materials, information about special events and information on the categorical programs they were responsible for. The co-op directors had skills in screening information and an "information overload" was not a problem with this group as it was with members of the school site councils and to some extent with migrant education. The co-op directors received material distributed by the project, were placed on key department mailing lists, and were invited to all project conferences and workshops.

(3) School Site Council members in the California School Improvement Program--unequal access due to non involvement/participation with any of the traditional educational groups. The School Improvement Program was discussed in the Leadership section, but a more detailed description of the Council's role is given below.

The School Site Council

SIP is based on the idea that those most affected by decisions should play a part in making them. To do this, each SIP school has a school site council (SSC). The SSC puts YOU, as a student, teacher, parent, or administrator, at the heart of the School Improvement process.

The SSC is a representative group at the school site. It plans, implements, and evaluates all programs offered at the school. It is made up of the principal, teachers, parents, community members, and, at the secondary school level, students. Each group selects its own participants-teachers choose teachers, parents choose parents, and so on. Ideally, the School Improvement process extends well beyond the council to include other parents, students, and teachers-in short, everyone in the school community.

With the approval of the local board, the SSC may seek participation in SIP. If a school joins SIP, its SSC can set up subcommittees for special areas of the curriculum, such as basic skills or multicultural subjects. The SSC can decide - in cooperation with the community organizations-to make work experience programs available to students. In addition, and this may be its most important role, the school site council has authority to budget SIP funds at the school site. The local district school board, however retains overall financial responsibility.*

*Taken from 1981 Department brochure, "School Improvement, Making California Education Better"

This group is not included in any of the mailing lists commonly used to distribute information--and yet, in California, they have a major decision-making powers for schools participating in the School Improvement Program and, as of 1982, decision-making powers regarding the state consolidation program and other state and federal block grant programs. Serving these members with information services was, and still is critical for California. But materials do need to be screened carefully to determine what is useful and practical and to prevent "information overload."

Section III

Project Outcomes

California's capacity building project has had an impact on the information and resources used by the agency's staff in working with educators in county offices and school districts. The state library has assumed responsibility for providing information resources for department staff and SMERC continues to provide such resources to many of the counties and school districts in California.

Benefits over the five year period in terms of the original goals were as follows:

1. Improve the capacity and productivity of educational agencies in California for knowledge production, acquisition, dissemination, and utilization.

Personnel in many of California educational agencies received training in the areas of knowldege production, acquisition, dissemination and utilization. Training sessions involved:

- Co-op directors training by Northwest Laboratory (project years one and two).
- Department field teams (project Linkers) training by project staff and personnel from SMERC (project years one through four).
- School personnel--teachers, administrators, parents and community people--involved in implementing California's School Improvement Program (project years four and five).

2. Foster the development of a statewide comprehensive dissemination capacity.

This goal was accomplished through the development and implementation of the department Dissemination Plan (See Attachment A) which provided the process whereby department field teams (project Linkers) better served their clients throughout California. Both the Dissemination Steering Committee and Information

Dissemination Committee increased dissemination capacity through their coordinating activities and training sessions held at the two statewide dissemination conferences and other meetings held during the last two years of the project. Persons having responsibility for information and dissemination services in county offices and school districts received training in the use of ERIC and other information data bases; learned how to broker validated and exemplary programs for their teachers and administrators; and had numerous opportunities to share their successes and discuss solutions to mutual problems with each other.

3. Improve and increase access to a wide range of relevant knowledge resources which have potential for improving education.

The project over the five years developed and produced a number of education packages designed to facilitate the location and use of existing resources. These packages were distributed to SMERC subcribers, principals of schools implementing the School Improvement Program, and users of department audio visual materials. They were also given out--with explanation--at the School Improvement meetings, the Dissemination Conferences, and major conferences. Information included:

- Descriptions of how to access ERIC and other data bases.
- ERIC printouts on key issues.
- Guide to locating exemplary programs for possible adoption or adaption as well as other staff development resources.
- Statistical information about education in California.
- Reprints of selected journal articles.
- Suggestions for locating local community resources.

4. Promote and facilitate the effective use of knowledge resources by educational decision makers and practitioners as they strive to improve educational practice.

The project accomplished this goal through some of the efforts already discussed in this section--the Dissemination Conferences, trainings and workshops conducted by the Dissemination Steering Committee and the Information Dissemination Committee, and the information packages.

Outcomes are most easily noted with in the SEA itself. The state library, which is part of the SEA in California, was able to purchase the entire ERIC microfiche collection during the project's third year. At the beginning of the project, the department staff had access to ERIC and other data bases through SMERC. SMERC was helpful in training department staff in the selection and use of information resources. The state library is located one block from the department's main building and is therefore quite convenient for department staff. Department staff steadily increased uses of literature searches in providing direct and indirect services to schools they serve. Uses of searches have included: (1) current research used as its bases for development of a state plan or proposal; (2) background and trends in curriculum or administrative areas used to develop programs regulations or guidelines, (3) listings of new teaching techniques or administrative procedures used as hand outs at meetings and workshops.

Microfiche readers are more in use within the department than they were before the project. When the project started there were a number of readers in the Office of Information which were kept in audio-visual storage. At the current time, all readers are checked out for department staff or are on long term loan. The Dissemination Steering Committee, established during the fourth year of the project, has and will continue to provide leadership for California dissemination. They were responsible for the two statewide dissemination forums held in the fourth and fifth years of the project and are currently considering alternatives to such forums in future years due to travel cut backs in almost all education agencies. No decisions have yet been made.

Evaluation data and feedback information were collected as part of any major function. Structured feedback forms were distributed and collected at the end of training workshops for project linkers, project presentations,

and annual dissemination forums. This information was then used to adjust or change similar activities in the future.

Periodically, all persons who had requested a search, used SMERC services or who had been referred to the library were sent an evaluation form to determine if their information or resource needs had been met. New procedures were established as needed to meet department staff information needs.

Telephone surveys were conducted regarding the use of audio-visual materials that were frequently requested. People were asked why they used the material, what their audiences were, what was the most helpful, and what was the least helpful. Results indicated that the training materials were helpful to people using these audio-visual materials. Hence, all audio-visual products now have accompanying training materials.

Project Function of dissemination planning and coordination continues to be provided by the Office of Information. Staff Development Unit is offering training opportunities to School Site Council members in the School Improvement Program. The State Library, which is part of the State Department of Education, has information resources--including ERIC--available to department staff.

Educational Practices were improved in the following ways through project activities over the past five years.

- Teachers, administrators, and other individuals/organizations on developed mailing lists had increased access to current educational materials and resources which could help them perform their duties in improved ways.
- Department staff, through the use of the Dissemination Plan and the Technical Assistant Guide planned and implemented their own dissemination activities in more effectively and efficiently for the educators they serve.
- Participants of the dissemination forums received current and timely information about new resources and exemplary programs with which to better serve their teachers and other educators.

- Members of the Dissemination Steering Committee and the Information Dissemination Committee provided leadership in the whole area of dissemination there by assisting educators in doing a better job throughout California.
- Members of School Site Councils in the School Improvement Program received timely and pertinent information assisting them in making the best decisions for California's children.

A summary of major project results is shown in the following chart.

Prior to 1976	As a Result of the Project
1. No written department dissemination plan.	1. Department dissemination plan written and approved in 1978. See attachment A for a copy of this plan.
2. No guidelines for department staff in preparing dissemination plans for their programs.	2. A Technical Assistance Guide was developed for department staff to assist them in developing dissemination plans for individual programs.
3. No coordinating groups for dissemination.	3. Two coordinating committees were formed--the Dissemination Steering Committee and the Information Dissemination Committee.

Prior to 1976	As a Result of the Project
4 No annual conference or opportunity for people in dissemination to share information and solutions to common problems.	4. An annual dissemination forum was held both in 1980 and in 198[illegible]. The Information Dissemination Committee sponsored these forums under the leadership of the Dissemination Steering Committee.
5. ERIC was not easily accessable or utilized on a regular basis by department staff.	5. ERIC files and computer were purchased by the State Library (which is part of the California Department of Education).
6. Information resources were not available to members of the school Site Councils in the School Improvement Program.	6. The name and addresses of the chairperson of each School Site Council (3400) has been built into the department's ongoing distribution system.

Advice To New Projects

Advice to new projects: first assess the agency's working arrangements with the field, then build upon already existing networks, and operate as a support to on going programs and not a "control".

In assessing the agency's working arrangements with the field, consider policies, procedures, and constraints as the project implementation is planned. Also determine the commitment and expectations from the agency's top administration--then set realistic goals and timelines.

Example from California: At the beginning of the project SMERC services were provided to high schools implementing the School Improvement Program. But

communicating with the principal's of these schools was cumbersome because there had been previous agreements that the department would mail materials to principals only through the district superintendent's offices. This obstacle should have been considered in planning this activity and the timeline should have reflected this extra layer that all communications had to go through.

Use existing networks--there in place, ready for immediately use, and many of the problems will have already been worked out. Dissemination projects can be effective by connecting networks with each other in the sharing of information resources and materials.

Example from California: A statewide dissemination project for career Education was funded just before the dissemination forum the fourth year of this project. The Career Education project director was looking for ways to get information out other than through other career education projects. She came to the forum and was able to set up contacts with county office resource centers and the teacher centers. She is still using these networks in her dissemination activities and has thanked the capacity building project numerous times. And yet the capacity building project did nothing but give people in different networks an opportunity to share resources. A lot was accomplished with very little effort.

Support what people are already doing--don't try to change the way people operate; they will see that as some kind of control and will become indifferent about the project. Project linkers should be able to experience success while performing dissemination tasks for you.

Example from California: In this capacity building project, department field teams were used as linkers to principals and teachers. They had periodic meetings with educators regarding the implementation of the School Improvement Program and state or federal categorical programs. The capacity building project supplied these field teams with imformation packages, audio-visual presentations, or other resources about the topics of these various meetings. The dissemination was done and the field teams had more resources for their meetings than they had in the past.

DISSEMINATION PLAN
for the
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The California State Department of Education was created in 1921 to provide state-level administration of the public school system. Today the Department has a staff of over 2,500 employees and is responsible for the disbursement of over $4 billion in funds, materials and supplies to local education agencies. There are approximately four million students in California served by 150,000 teachers in 7,000 public schools.

The Department is responsible for the public elementary and secondary system, postsecondary programs for adults, special schools, statewide public library services and the approval of some private schools.

The Department of Education assists schools in implementing new requirements, monitors programs for compliance with laws and regulations, and offers general technical assistance to improve educational practices.

The mammoth need for communications is obvious. There are many audiences in California--students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, taxpayers--all having specific information needs. The Department must build the capacity to respond to the needs of each audience.

Putting It All Together

An attempt to improve Department communications with local education agencies and the general public began in 1975 with a formal meeting. A speech made at the meeting by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wilson Riles, provides the philosophy upon which this dissemination plan is based. The speech is as follows:

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:
INFORMATION, DISSEMINATION AND DIFFUSION

I want to comment briefly about my concern for developing the kind of system that has the flexibility necessary to make us more effective in serving children. From my point of view, our challenge is to develop an information, dissemination, and diffusion system which:

1. Is able to give us progress in achieving department objectives, and

2. Is in tune with and responsive to our many constituents. We, the department and our constituents, need to agree on what ought to happen.

3. The system should be comprehensive and cohesive, not fragmented.

As we approach the planning of such a system, may I suggest you ask yourselves the "why" question first, and then the "what" and "how" question--for so often we forget why we are doing what we are doing!

Today we need systems designed to process data in which

the use is predetermined by the users. This assumes that school people will locate and store only relevant data, and that data centers and education resource centers will not become dumping grounds. The need for an information system which effectively serves producers and users is long overdue.

Some attention should be given to a communications network which is designed to elicit response from our many constituents. We need both input and feedback from educators and the general public. At present, most all communication is directed downward to our constituents--let's turn it around a bit! The network that links the Department with our constituents needs careful review.

The system to deliver successful practices to schools which have need is not developed department-wide. Staff members who are assigned to the functions of comprehensive planning and monitoring and work with schools have a beautiful opportunity to spread the word and help schools adopt or adapt successful practices. However, instructional practices must be validated as successful before we disseminate and diffuse them because we should be sure that the practices work and do, in fact, benefit students.

A big mistake we often make is to disseminate practices with the idea of encouraging schools to adopt them and too often, however, we forget to allocate sufficient resources to conduct demonstration and training for staff in the adopting schools.

Another great concern is quality. Materials developed for dissemination and diffusion should be of the highest quality. Poor quality productions will contribute to the erosion of our leadership image and turn people away.

And finally, in all that we do, we must evaluate our efforts and assess the impact we are making on education in California. We must be accountable to our constituents for our objectives and the level of demonstrated performance must be that which was expected or better.

My challenge to you is: get it all together . . . a total statewide comprehensive information, dissemination and diffusion system.

The job is overwhelming and it will be difficult at times. Resources are available throughout the department and in the state. Most of the pieces to the giant puzzle which you will attempt to assemble are present in California.

If you pull together toward this common objective, it will happen. If you play the game of protecting your interests at the expense of the common objective, we will surely fail. Before a statewide system can ever be established, the department must put its own house in order. It is my expectation that you will begin this group process today and tomorrow.

I wish you well!

This plan was developed by the Office of Information in order to accomplish a "total statewide comprehensive, information, dissemination and diffusion system."

All of the services offered by the Office of Information are coordinated in implementing such a system. These services are described in the following narrative.

News Releases

The Office of Information's Public Information Services unit writes and distributes news releases about important new developments related to educational activities. Topics include statewide testing results, new education programs, changes in existing programs, successful educational practices, new studies and the results of research projects. The releases, which also serve as crisp, easy-to-read summaries for program managers and staff consultants, are sent to the press, television, radio and state and national publications specializing in education. Articles are initiated by Office of Information or by Department units that need to communicate with large audiences of educators or the general public about their programs.

Writing and Editing

The Office of Information provides writing and editing services to help produce clear, concise reports, newsletters, occasional papers, monographs, summaries, guides, brochures, pamphlets and handbooks.

Department units are encouraged to seek the help of the Office of Information at the start of a publication project. Assignment of writers is made in consultation with the Office of Information. Direction and quality control is provided at all stages of production.

The Bureau of Publications

The Bureau of Publications provides Department units with editing, typesetting, graphics, translating and other services necessary to prepare written materials for publication. The bureau has been charged with the responsibility for ensuring that all Department publications meet minimum standards for publishing. The bureau also acts as liaison with the Office of State Printing; tracks all publications through the developmental process to printing; handles all copyright matters for the Department; maintains the coding system (CDS) for institutions of learning in California; produces the public and private school directories; and sells and distributes Department publications.

Publication Sales

Publication Sales offers Department publications to interested educators and the general public at cost. Selected Publications of the California State Department of Education, a list of publications available through Publication Sales, is prepared twice each year by the Bureau of Publications.

The Bureau of Publications maintains a distribution staff and facility at the State Textbook Warehouse for filling publication orders, executing initial distributions and mailing large volumes of printed material. Arrangements can be made with the Textbook Warehouse for bulk mailings to offices of county superintendents of schools for redistribution to districts and schools. Computer-produced mailing labels are also available for individual mailings to many categories of California schools and districts.

Media Services

The Media Services Unit has staff and facilities capable of producing motion pictures of any length required by the Department units. It assists in developing both the film "story" and the budget. The Office of Information helps to plan and produce a complete "package" (printed materials) to accompany a film when it is distributed. If appropriate, television broadcast of new films will be arranged as a public service presentation. Filmstrip and slidetape presentations can also be produced. Photography, narration and mixed sound track with music are included. Public service broadcast announcements for radio and television can be produced to make pupils, parents, educators and the general public aware of important educational programs and issues. The Media Services Unit works with the Department units in preparing announcements or "spots" and distributing them to appropriate stations. They also help Department units plan and produce videotape presentations.

Graphics

The Office of Information has two graphic arts units to serve the Department. The unit located at 721 Capitol Mall produces conference exhibits, displays, charts overhead transparencies, illustrations, cartoons, signs, posters, creative photography and hand-lettered certificates.

The other unit, located in the Bureau of Publications, prepares all of the graphic arts necessary for publications.

Audiovisual Equipment

Audiovisual equipment (motion picture projectors, slide projectors, overhead projectors and tape recorders) are available to Department units on a rental basis. The funds collected from these charges are used to maintain and replace the equipment. In addition to limited distribution of Department-produced films and other media, training in the use of the equipment and cassette tape duplication is provided.

Literature Searches

The Information Dissemination Project gives Department staff access to information they need, such as curriculum content, instructional methods and school/classroom organization. This material is used for bibliographies; source materials for report and speech writing; needs assessment and program planning; and up-to-date research on specific topics in education. The Project manages the contract with San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC) to provide computer literature searches and other information resources to Department staff.

Public Information Officers

The Office of Information works directly with a network of public information officers (PIO's) located in county offices of education and school districts. The PIO's have responsibility for disseminating information to their own audiences. The Office of Information administrator meets regularly with this group to provide briefings on Department programs and to obtain feedback about the usefulness of Department communications.

HOW DISSEMINATION WORKS

The California Information Dissemination Project is a federally funded project located in the Office of Information. It's major role is coordinating dissemination activities.

Technical assistance is provided to Department programs to help them communicate with their clients or audiences. The dissemination activities vary to communication needs of each program but the process is the same. A description of this process follows:

1. The Project assists Department programs in assessing the following:

   * The availability of current materials to each target audience.
   * The quality, quantity and availability of products.
   * The location of successful new programs.
   * Delivery systems already in contact with target audiences.
   * The training required to make these delivery systems work.

2. The Project staff works with participating programs to develop a dissemination plan and to identify the resources needed.

3. New materials and resources are developed jointly by the Office of Information and the participating program.

4. Appropriate delivery systems and training is a part of each program's dissemination plan.

5. Each delivery system includes an evaluation component to help assess the usefulness of materials and the effectiveness of the delivery process and training.

Planning for dissemination is an ongoing PROCESS. The Project facilitates coordinated dissemination activities by developing new plans and revising and updating existing plans.

Education Resources

The California Information Dissemination Project identifies, locates and disseminates education and information resources to appropriate audiences and networks. The Project also refers people to other appropriate resource persons.

Feedback on resources and information is received by the Project on a regular basis. Each Department Program gathers needs assessment data from its clients. These data are collected in a summary form by the Office of Information. Broad information needs are also identified by guidelines established for education by the State Board of Education and the California State Legislature.

The Office of Information and Project staff assist programs in responding to identified needs by locating information and resources and by developing products such as publications, films, brochures and videotapes. Information and resources outside of the Department are identified by communicating regularly with major resource centers in California, such as San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC), Los Angeles County Educational Resource Services (LANCERS), Assisting Contra Costa Education through Research Services (ACCESS), San Diego Instructional Resources Center, the State Library, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development and Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (SWRL

Information and resources are continually updated to meet changing needs and to respond to evaluation feedback. Information about the usefulness of these resources is formally solicited by Department programs and Project staff through written evaluation forms, surveys and input gathered at various meetings.

Linkage

The project staff is in contact with public information officers, the communications advisory group, the California Linker Network, educational laboratories, resource center and numerous other networks that have education resources. Resources must be shared among these networks if this dissemination plan is to accomplish "a total statewide comprehensive information, dissemination and diffusion system." Formal activities include communications to Department staff through the Department monthly newsletter, periodical memoranda to various networks in the field, planning meetings with directors of resource centers and an annual dissemination conference sponsored by the Project.

Monthly lunch meetings were held with dissemination representatives from Department programs to share resources and coordinate dissemination activities between Department programs.

The Project periodically conducts workshops for Department staff on how to locate and use information and resources. The training focuses on: (1) the use of information and resources in Department developmental work; and (2) ways of helping school personnel locate and use information and resources to improve their instructional programs.

SUMMARY

The Information Dissemination Project coordinates Department dissemination activities. The Project locates and disseminates information and resources to Department staff, public information officers, California Linker Network, California resource centers and educational laboratories. These networks have the responsibility to inform their clients about such information and resources. By linking these networks together with information and resources. A cohesive and comprehensive information dissemination system can exist in California.

Developed by:

Information Dissemination Project
The Office of Information